

LICENSING AND INSPECTION OF CHILD CARE FACILITIES IN MISSOURI

SECTION FOR CHILD CARE REGULATION

The purpose of this document is to provide basic information on the requirements for operating child care facilities in Missouri. For additional information on operating child care facilities in Missouri, please visit our web site at <http://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/>.

Child Care Facility Specialists are located throughout the state and are responsible for the initial licensing or approval of child care facilities and for monitoring child care facilities for compliance with Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services child care rules.

Child Care Law

The responsibility for the licensing and inspection of child care facilities was delegated by statute in 1955. The statutes make it unlawful for any person to establish or operate a child care facility caring for more than four unrelated children without being licensed.

Child Care Classifications

Child care may be provided in a family child care home, a group child care home, a child care center, or a license-exempt facility (nursery school or a facility run by a religious organization).

Family Child Care Home

A “family child care home” is a child care program where care is given by a person licensed as a family child care home provider. If there is one adult child care provider, family child care homes may be licensed for up to six children, including a maximum of three children under age two and/or for up to ten children including a maximum of two children under age two. If only four children are present, all the children may be under age two. If the provider has an assistant present, the home may be licensed for up to ten children, including a maximum of four children under age two, or for up to eight children who may all be under age two.

Group Child Care Home

A “group child care home” is a child care program where care is given by a person licensed as a group child care home provider for 11-20 children. A group child care home may be a location other than the provider’s permanent residence or separate from the provider’s living quarters. Group child care homes must meet the same requirements for staff/child ratios as child care centers.

Child Care Center

Child care centers may provide care for any number of children dependent on the director’s qualifications, available staffing, amount of usable indoor floor space, amount of outdoor play space and materials and equipment. A child care center may be in a location other than the provider’s permanent residence or a separate from the provider’s living quarters.

Nursery School

A “nursery school” is a program for preschool children that is operated for no more than four hours per child per day.

Child Care Programs Operated by a Religious Organization

Child care programs that are under the exclusive control of a religious organization caring for children up to 18 years of age.

Health Care

The provider must meet specific requirements for reporting communicable diseases, caring for children when ill, administering medication, emergency care procedures, hand washing procedures and immunization of children.

Nutrition

The provider must supply and serve nutritious meals and snacks. Acceptable food components and serving sizes for meals and snacks are outlined in a chart for each group. Children's menus must be based on the chart outlined in the rules applicable to the facility.

Some food services may be eligible for reimbursement through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). You may call the Bureau of Community Food and Nutrition Assistance at 800-733-6251 for further information or visit their web site at <http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/foodprograms/cacfp/index.php>

Records and Reports

The provider must maintain accurate records to meet administrative requirements and to ensure knowledge of children and their families. Reports must be submitted to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services as required.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Child Care Rules

The licensing rules for family child care homes are contained in a booklet entitled [Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Homes](#).

The licensing rules for group child care homes and child care centers are contained in a booklet entitled [Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers](#).

Rules regarding facilities operated by religious organization and rules for nursery schools are contained in a booklet entitled [Rules for License-Exempt Child Care Facilities](#).

For copies of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services child care rules, please visit our web site at <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/safety/childcare/lawsregs.php>

Licensing and Inspection Process

If you are interested in operating a child care facility, you must attend an orientation about child care in Missouri, licensing rules, application requirements, training requirements, and the licensing and/or inspection process for the type of facility you wish to operate. You cannot provide care for more than four unrelated children without being licensed and/or inspected. To become licensed, an application must be made on forms provided by the Section for Child Care Regulation. **There is no charge for the application or the license.** A license is issued for up to two years.

Upon receipt of a completed application, an investigation is made to determine facility compliance with rules. The investigation includes an inspection of the entire premises of the proposed facility by a Child Care Facility Specialist. A fire safety inspection conducted by personnel from the Division of Fire Safety and a sanitation inspection conducted by local or state Department of Health and Senior Services personnel will be requested by the Child Care Facility Specialist. A Child Care Facility Specialist will inspect the facility and observe the program periodically to ensure continued compliance with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' child care rules.

Required Staff/Child Ratios

The following staff/child ratios apply to group child care homes and child care centers:

<u>Ages of Children</u>	<u>Number of Children per One Adult</u>
Birth – Two years	4
Two years of age	4 or more the ratio is 1 adult to 8 children
Three – Four years of age	10
Five years of age and up	16
Mixed ages, two and up	10

Child Care Program

In centers, group homes, and family homes a child care program must include appropriate supervision of children; emergency fire and tornado drills, positive discipline techniques with no physical punishment permitted; appropriate diapering and toilet training procedures; and a daily schedule of age-appropriate activities for children.

Buildings and Grounds

The premises of the facility must be safe and suitable for the care of children. Each building used must be in compliance with fire safety and sanitation requirements. It is the responsibility of the child care provider to inquire about local building and zoning requirements and be in compliance with those codes. The indoor child care area must provide at least 35 square feet of usable floor space per child. The facility must have an adequate outdoor play area, which is free of hazards. The area must provide at least 75 square feet of space per child. Outdoor play areas in group child care homes, child care centers and license-exempt facilities must be fenced to protect children.

Furniture, Equipment and Materials

Sufficient furniture, equipment and materials must be provided for the number and ages of children in care to meet their physical and developmental needs. This includes sleeping equipment, tables and seating equipment, indoor play materials and equipment, and outdoor equipment.

Transportation

The provider is responsible for the care, safety and supervision of children on field trips and at any time children are transported away from the facility. Parents must be informed when field trips are planned and written parental consent must be on file for all field trips and transportation. Drivers and vehicles must meet the requirements of Missouri law including appropriate driver's license for transporting children and appropriate safety restraints.

Health and Medical Examinations

Children

A medical examination report for each preschool child must be on file at the facility within 30 days following admission of each child. The parent (s) of a school-age child must provide a report at the time of enrollment indicating the child's health history, any current health problems and any restrictions necessary for the child's care. Information that the child has completed age-appropriate immunizations, is exempt from immunization requirements or is in the process of completing immunizations must be on file at the facility before a child is accepted for care.

Adult

Family child care home providers must have a medical examination report on file at the time the facility is licensed. Family child care home assistants employed or volunteering more than five hours per week must have a medical examination report on file within 30 days of beginning work in the home.

All adults working in any capacity in a group child care home or child care center, including volunteers counted in staff/child ratios, must have a medical examination report on file at the time of initial licensure or within 30 days following employment. , All persons indicated above must include in the medical examination report a "Risk Assessment for Tuberculosis" form signed by a health care professional or a negative Tuberculin skin test on file.

Staff/Background Screening

***General Requirements**

All staff must be of good character and intent; be qualified to provide care conducive to the welfare of children; have knowledge of the needs of children; be sensitive to the capabilities, interests and problems of children; and be capable of handling emergencies promptly and intelligently.

All staff of group child care homes and child care centers, along with family child care home providers and their adult household members, will be screened for child abuse/neglect and criminal record.

Child Care Training and Professional Development

Child care providers are required to meet annual training requirements related to health, child development, nutrition, and other areas related to children's safety and well-being. A child care provider is required to obtain twelve (12) clock hours of training annually. Family child care home providers and all assistants working more than five hours per week must receive at least 12 clock hours of child-care related training during each year of employment. Group child care home providers, center directors, all other caregivers and volunteers counted in staff/child ratios must receive at least 12 clock hours of child-care related training during each year of employment. The education and experience requirements for directors of child care facilities vary dependent on the size of the facility. A Department of Health and Senior Services representative can explain the specific requirements for each size facility.

Approved training for clock hour credit must be based on competencies (essential knowledge and skill areas) for assuring quality child care. Child care related training topics include: health, safety, nutrition, developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences for children; positive guidance and discipline; positive communication and interaction with families; planning and setting up an appropriate environment for children; professional and administrative practices.

Child Care Training and Professional Development Opportunities include:

- Training workshops on various topics;
- Child Development Associate (CDA) training and assessment to assist child care providers earn a national CDA credential from the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition;
- College credit training from some colleges and universities;
- Approved online training;
- Advanced and specialized training for entry level child care staff, directors, infant/toddler caregivers, and caring for children with special needs; and
- Individualized technical assistance and training to assist providers to access needs and make improvements in their respective programs.

Inclusion Services

An inclusive child care program is dedicated to giving the best early care and education possible to ALL children by making sure every child, including children with special needs, feels welcome and important. Inclusion teaches children and adults some great life lessons in accepting others and ourselves as unique individuals with unique strengths and needs. If your program is in need of assistance implementing or enhancing the inclusion services provided in your facility to meet the needs of children and families, contact United 4 Children. You can call United 4 Children at 800-467-2322 or visit [United 4 Children](http://www.united4children.org) for help finding a suitable program. These services are provided through funding from Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Child Care Assistance Program through Department of Social Services/Family Support Division

Some families may be eligible for assistance with their child care cost through the Child Care Assistance Program. Families should contact their local Family Support Division office to determine whether they are eligible for child care assistance. The Department of Social Services (DSS) may contract with licensed providers to pay for child care services for eligible children. License-exempt providers may enter into a registration agreement with DSS to provide services to families. To learn more about the Child Care Assistance Program and how to do business with DSS go to <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/childcare/> or call 573-522-1385.

Child Care Aware® of Missouri

Child Care Aware® of Missouri coordinates activities with four regional agencies statewide. Its regional agencies provide professional development and quality improvement services. Child Care Aware® of Missouri staff assist families in locating child care through referrals to local child care providers. Contact Child Care Aware® of Missouri at 800-200-9017 or via their website at web site at www.mo.childcareaware.org.